

House Passes 21st Century Green School Construction Bill

Thursday, May 14 2009

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WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Congressman Mike Michaud supported House passage of H.R. 2187, the 21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act. The bill would provide \$6.4 billion in federal funds to upgrade school buildings to make them more energy efficient and more reliant on renewable sources of energy. Michaud voted to pass similar legislation last year when it was considered in the House. The Senate never acted on the bill

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“Maine has a demonstrated need for this type of funding,” said Michaud. “If this program is signed into law and fully funded, school districts throughout Maine would benefit. The funding would be distributed based on current formulas and would help address economic and educational challenges faced across our state. I supported this bill last year because of the potential it holds for job creation, improved facilities, and school budget savings in Maine. I can only hope that this year the Senate will follow the House’s example and pass this legislation.”

Based on 2009 data, it has been estimated that Maine could receive \$23,793,000 from the 21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act. Below are links to estimates of the amount of funding each state and school district would receive under the bill for Fiscal Year 2010. It is important to note that these estimates are based on two things happening: 1) the bill being signed into law, and 2) an appropriations bill being signed into law that fully funds the program at the authorized level of \$6.4 billion. The estimates are based on the existing Title I education funding formula and may not reflect exact allocations that states or school districts receive when these funds are actually allocated. Fiscal Year 2010 estimates for some communities in Maine include:

- Auburn -- \$530,000
- Lewiston -- \$951,000
- Waterville -- \$690,000
- Bangor -- \$559,000
- Presque Isle -- \$204,000

A full list of preliminary estimates from the Congressional Research Service can be found by following the following two links:

- [Click here to download state-level data \(PDF\)](#)
- [Click here to download school district-level data \(PDF\)](#)

Attached is a fact sheet on the bill prepared by the House Education and Labor Committee.

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The 21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act

School buildings should be safe and healthy learning environments for children. But according to recent estimates, America's schools are hundreds of billions of dollars short of the funding needed to bring them up to good condition. Research shows a correlation between school facility quality and student achievement. Modernizing school buildings would help revive our economy by creating jobs and preparing workers for the clean energy jobs of the future. And by upgrading school buildings to make them more energy efficient and more reliant on renewable sources of energy, modernized school buildings can also help reduce the emissions that contribute to global warming. Congress already has endorsed these principles by making green school modernization, renovation and repair part an allowable use of funds under the state fiscal stabilization fund in the H.R. 1, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The 21st Century Green High-Performing Public Schools Facilities Act (H.R. 2187) would:

Provide schools with access to funding for modernization, renovation and repair projects

- Authorizes \$6.4 billion for school facilities projects for fiscal year 2010, and ensures that school districts will quickly receive funds for school modernization, renovation, and repairs that create healthier, safer, and more energy-efficient teaching and learning climates.

- Allocates the same percentage of funds to school districts that they receive under Part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, except that it guarantees each such district a minimum of \$5,000.

Encourage energy efficiency and the use of renewable resources in schools

- Requires the majority of funds (100 percent by 2015) to be used for projects that meet green building standards.

- Requires school districts to publicly report the educational, energy and environmental benefits of projects, how they comply with the green building requirements, and the percentage of funds used for projects at low-income, rural and charter schools.

- Requires the Secretary of Education, in consultation with the Secretary of Energy and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, to disseminate best practices in school construction and to provide technical assistance to states and school districts regarding best practices.

Provide additional aid to Gulf Coast schools still recovering from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

- Authorizes separate funds — \$600 million over six years — for public schools that were damaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Many students still attend school in temporary classrooms.

Improve student achievement and increase teacher retention by providing more children and teachers with a modern, safe, clean and healthy place for learning

- Research demonstrates that better school facilities result in improved student achievement and teacher recruitment and retention.
- Building quality affects the context for learning — such that lighting, noise reduction, air quality and other factors affect student learning gains and behavior.
- The physical condition of schools affects teacher and principal recruitment and retention.
- Forty percent of teachers who transferred schools and thirty-nine percent who left teaching cited the need for significant school repairs as a source of their dissatisfaction.
- One-third of school principals cited at least one environmental factor as interfering with their ability to deliver instruction.

Boost the economy by injecting demand into the marketplace, improving communities and generating jobs

- As our nation faces recession and rising unemployment, direct federal investment in school construction and renovation could provide an immediate boost to our economy and generate jobs.
- School quality has a direct, positive impact on residential property values and can improve a community's ability to attract businesses and workers.
- Investments in school facilities bring money into local economies through job creation and supply purchases and can help revitalize distressed neighborhoods.
- Federal funding for the modernization, renovation, or repair of school facilities could be spent quickly and efficiently to address the loss of 1.3 million construction jobs over the last year and half.
- Analyses of this legislation estimate that this bill would support 136,000 new jobs.

Make our schools part of the solution to the environmental crisis by encouraging more energy efficiency and the use of renewable resources

- A green school uses 30 percent less energy and 30 percent less water than a conventional school.
- Green schools reduce harmful carbon dioxide emissions by 40 percent, which helps reduce global climate change and lessen our carbon footprint.
- Environmentally-friendly schools have better lighting and temperature controls, which promote higher student achievement.
- Evidence suggests that poor environments in conventional schools, due primarily to the effects of indoor pollutants, adversely affect the health, performance, and attendance of students, while green schools have a more comfortable indoor environment, improved ventilation and indoor air quality.

Save money in the short-term and in the long-term through the use of green building techniques

- The average national school construction cost is \$150 per square foot and building green adds only \$3 per square foot.
- In the short-term, green schools have an average savings of \$96,760 per year.
- In the long-term savings from green buildings are on average \$70 per square foot.
- A green school typically utilizes 33 percent less energy and 32 percent less water.